



AN INTERPRETIVE STUDY OF SELECTED DESCRIPTIVE IMAGES IN C.T MSIMANG'S POETRY

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this study is on an employment of images in poetry to describe objects and situations with precision, force and vividness. Images are used for more factual reflection of the scene and object. They become descriptive when manifested in various forms for comparisons, resemblances, contrasts and differences as well as for associated ideas. The appreciation of literature and the development of the literary taste are advanced by images. Figures of speech are used as words, phrases or expressions in other than their plain or literal meaning in order to produce a special effect. They deliberately interfere with language usage to transfer the meaning of one object into another object. The interference takes the form of transference or 'carrying over' with the aim of achieving a new meaning. Figurative language plays a vital role in selected poetry due to an employment of various images. Various words, phrases or ideas are ambiguously employed for specific effect. Conjunctive ambiguity underlies metaphor and allegory. All types of ambiguities suggest meanings in various contexts. Most poetic words or phrases in this work reflect separate meanings that are projected, added, conjoined or disjoined. The theoretical and interpretive approaches serve as a point of departure in this discourse.

Introduction

This research study on images refers to the analytic survey of specific figures of speech. They are selected, defined, explained and interpreted. Their significances in bringing about the poetic diction, license, meaning, message and theme are highlighted. They are the fundamental figures of speech that explicitly display the connotative meanings, literariness and language skills. The poetic images reflect the real-life situation through poetic skills and meanings. The literary criticism, comparative and textual analyses are evident when they are looked at from the basic methodologies, theories and strategies on selected figures of speech. Imagery is the use of words that bring picture to the mind of the listener or reader; or that appeal to the senses.

The relationship between poet and reader is called up by the images which are brilliantly and artistically used to reveal the emotion, rhythm, aesthetic value and force.

Theoretical understanding and research methodology

Research methodology refers to a system of methods used in a particular field to verify a valid and reliable perception or phenomena, events, processes or issues at many different levels (Bruce 1996: 40): The research methodology is a plan for selecting data collection procedures to answer the research questions. The choice of a suitable method for a particular study is determined by the topic and rationale for the study. The methods that are used in this study are literary criticism, comparative method and textual analysis. A cross-validation among data sources, time periods and theoretical undertakings schemes are evident in this study.

Data collection refers to the collection of information to be used in the investigation from primary and secondary sources. A primary source is an original object or document, the raw material or firsthand information which was created during the time under study, such as poetry. Secondary source refers to something written about a primary source; such as articles and criticisms. The secondary sources of this study are comments on, interpretations of and discussions about the original materials, such as books, dissertations and articles.

The descriptive images on contrast and difference

There are various images that are based on contrast and difference. The rhetoric devices of antithesis, pun, irony, ambiguity and sarcasm are explication selected for this study of Msimang's work. The use of artistic language manifests through various images which reveal poetic assertions, views and decorations.

Antithesis

This is a rhetoric device which uses contrasting words or phrases to balance a specific idea in a poem. Reaske, (1966:27) highlights the following about antithesis:

... results when a pair or more of strongly contrasting terms are presented together. If words, ideas or clauses are widely divergent but present together there is a certain amount of resulting tension which makes the line highly provocative.

Corbett, (1965:430) views antithesis as:

... the juxtaposition of contrasting ideas, often in parallel structure.

Antithesis is a basically contrasting idea which is sharpened by the use of opposite words. The words are used to express the feelings, attitudes and opinions of the poet. They are used to express the actual emotion that is called forth by genuine experience with the intention of benefiting the listener or reader.

Contrasting words

This rhetoric device is found in the poem, Ku-DBZ Ntuli (In honour of DBZ Ntuli):

UMshay' edwaleni angafi, kuf' itshe.
(Msimang. 1980:11).
(One who strikes the rock and does not die, but the rock is broken off.)

It is prevalent that in poetry the meaning of a word cannot be equated to the denotative meaning. The meaning of a word in a poem can be viewed connotatively or with an extension of meaning which is described by Heese and Lawton, (1988:79) as follows:

The words employed by the poet need not be different in themselves from ordinary words used in straightforward prose or everyday speech; but in the context of a poem they may acquire that extension of meaning characteristic of poetic diction which stimulates and delights the imagination.

The words that are contrasted are angafi "not to die" and kuf' itshe "to be broken off." If we look at the phrasal power, we see the use of expressive sound patterns that produce an effect of tension caused by competing opposites. The rock is bestowed with the animate action of dying as if it were a human with all senses. The ideas that are brought about by antithesis do not emphasize mere opposites but they evoke a certain response from the reader and listener.

Another example of contrasting words is the following:

Ngibabukile abanombela bedilika ...
(Msimang 1990:19).
(I have been looking at those that climb and fall ...)

This is found in the poem, Izintaba Ezikude (The far-distanced mountains). The contrasting words are -nombela (climb) and -dilika (fall) and they are used to bring about balance. The two opposite words are purposely used by the poet to highlight specific actions. The poet appears to be astonished with what he sees. The balance of actions is brought about by the two juxtaposed words with the contrasting meanings.

Contrasting clauses

Contrast is evident in the praise poem of King Shaka, where the poet describes his father, Senzangakhona as follows:

Obemzimba muhle nangendlala enkulu ...
(Msimang 1990:54).
(One who had a beautiful body even during famine ...)

A beautiful body and famine depict two contrasting ideas and meanings, but they are brought together to stress certain thoughts and feelings. The meaningful idea is that he was an ever-strong person who was able to withstand all natural forces.

In the poem, Siwela IMoretele (We crossed Moretele River), the poet focuses on the sun as a symbol. Why do we call a sun a symbol? Reaske, (1966:108) gives his opinion on a symbol as follows:

The usual answer is that if some picture or representation is repeated over and over again it becomes a symbol.

We are concerned about the representation of one thing by another. The sun is not mentioned but implied in the extract. However, the contrast that is expressed is in seeing it rises and not seeing it sets. Perhaps the word "sun" has been left out in order to achieve a more compact expression or for economy of words. The rising and setting of the sun represent life and death. The contrast paints a visual picture of the scene. The poet antithetically states as follows:

Balibona liphuma, abalibonanga lishona ...
(Msimang 1990:15).
(They saw it rise, but did not see it set ...)

The poetic diction used entails the recurrent sound effects of hope and prospects, when the sun rises, and despair, when the sun sets. The rhythm of the poet cannot be regular because of this contrast. Seeing the sun rises reveals expectation, hope and life, while seeing the sun set represents death.

More examples on contrasting clauses are found in the poem Uthando (Love):

Ngamfoma izithukuthuku kulel' ungqoqwane ...
Amagquma nezikhinsi kwaphenduk' amathafa.
(Msimang 1980:8).
(I sweat while there is frost ...
The hills and steeps became the plains ...)

The poet compares sweating which occurs when it is hot, with the frost of very cold weather conditions. Hills and steep areas are compared with plains. The ideas and meanings are not to stress differences but to emphasize the actions and facts. The power of love is expressed through contrasting words. It is like poetry itself which is viewed by some critics to be a literary representation derived from their allegiance to philosophical idealism. It seems to be as intuitively powerful as the poetic inspiration that carries the poetic knowledge of all times. Love seems to be an unpredictable phenomenon with no limits for nourishment.

Sarcasm

Sarcasm is a rhetoric device which means precisely what is says in a sharp and bitter manner. Sarcasm is found in all types of poems and themes for narration, explanation, vivid clarification, explicit illustration and decorative impression.

Sarcasm in elegy

In the poem Siyashweleza Nodumehlezi (Nodumehlezi, we are apologizing) the poet appears to be talking to Shaka:

Phenduka, sibheke siphenduke silibuse!
(Msimang 1990:3).
(Turn and look at us so that we can govern!)

His plea is endorsed with the use of the same consonants and vowels. Sarcasm is depicted by the instructive words phenduka (turn) and sibheke (look at us). The poet advocates for rationality that presupposes stability, healthy atmosphere and a good moral life. It comes as rational reasoning which postulates oneness, integrity and righteousness.

Sarcasm in satiric poem

This is an appeal to the sense of movement and bodily effort. Kinaesthetic imagery is manifested in the real or imaginary world through the use of poetic action and poetic form. This leads us to the broader view of poetry as a representational, verbal and imaginative art that has both internal and external structures examined for poetic qualities. The relevant example is found in the poem, Yimpi (It is war)

Ekhanda, pho!
Ezibilini, bhuxe!
(Msimang 1980:30)
(To be struck on the head [with a knobkerrie!]
To be stabbed in the entrails [with an assegai!])

Here the poet uses only four words. The word ekhanda (on the head) is given more comprehensive meaning through the monosyllabic ideophone, pho! That describes how the head was struck by the knobkerrie. It has an onomatopoeic effect that is vividly displayed by the ideophone. The second line depicts how the person is stabbed in the entrails or stomach with an assegai. The words "entrails" or "stomach" are meaningful if coupled with the dissyllabic ideophone bhuxe! The ideophone describes how the entrails are stabbed with an assegai. Isagila (knobkerrie) and umkhonto (assegai) are both images implied through action in both lines. They are left out because of a figurative device, ellipsis. They are purposely left out to achieve a more compact expression. The two lines

are poetic in nature because of this compactness. If the two words were included in the lines they would have depicted the prosaic expression:

Ekhanda ngesagila pho!
Ezibilini ngomkhonto bhuxe!

The physical force of bodily effort is apparent when there is war. In the poem we experience confrontation which leads to victory and defeat. The knobkerrie and assegai are symbols of war, and destruction. The introductory stanza depicts traditional weapons of fighting, the assegai and the knobkerrie. The second stanza depicts sophisticated weaponry, the gun, which is metaphorically called "the striking lightning", umbani, bani! The concluding stanza appears to be a revelation when the poet says the mist is cleared, "inkungu ... damu"; the round ball-like sun shines, "ibhamuzakazi lelanga ... bhamu". The end-rhyme -amu emphasizes clearness and goodness. Ultimately, we find reconciliation, oneness and humanness.

Sarcasm in praise-poem

In the praise-poem, Onoziqu Bakwa-Unisa (Unisa graduates) the poet sarcastically discusses the commitment of women to formal education:

Kazi lusan' olusemhlane uyoncela kubani;
Kazi bhodw' eliseziko uyokhwezelwa ngubani;
Onephango useyodl' iKentucky Fried Chicken.
(Msimang 1990:42).

(To whom are you going to suck, baby?
Who is going to add firewood at a fire-place?
At least the hungry one shall eat
Kentucky Fried Chicken.)

The poem reveals how and to what extent people are dedicated to formal education at Unisa. The poet applauds the commitment of the women in acquiring distance tuition, especially in this gender equity era. The extract specifically focuses on women's role and actions. Their involvement in education is sarcastically assessed by the poet as they are no longer able to look after their young ones and they no longer cook at homes. All the words that are used, especially -ncela (suck), ibhodwe (pot), iphango (hunger) enhance the gustatory imagery. The specific ideas of education are expressed in gustatory imagery this way. Historically, women's role in society was centred on weaving, basketry, pottery and home life. Due to social transformation, all opportunities are now available to women. Women can take up central positions in all spheres of life to develop the country in general.

Pun

A pun plays on words to bring about a humorous effect. Such play on words takes various forms depending on mood, emotion, ideas and diction.

Cuddon, (1976:540-541) defines pun as:

A figure of speech which involves a play upon words... the pun is widespread in many literatures and gives rise to a fairly universal form of humour.

When the pun is used repetition also occurs. One word takes the position of various parts of speech due to the added prefix or suffix. This play on words enhances the specific idea and the quality of action. It is the witty use of two words which have the same or similar sounds but different meanings.

Noun-locative punning

In the poem, UShaka KaSenzangakhona (Shaka, son of Senzangakhona), we find the repetition of a word in two different senses:

... Ilanga elikhanye eLangeni
Kwaye kwakhanya kithi kwaZulu.
(Msimang 1990:54).
(The sun that shines at eLangeni
Until it brightens in KwaZulu.)

The word ilanga (sun) is a noun, while eLangeni is a locative or adverb of place. The second word is derived from the first with prefixing and suffixing to show locativity. The person who is referred to as ilanga (sun) is Nandi, Shaka's mother. There is no doubt that she was a beautiful lady who played a vital role in her son's upbringing. She is bestowed with the attributes of the sun because of her physical appearance. She is further seen as a sun because she became the centre of attraction. Her clan's lineage is given prominence through her.

Possessive - relative punning

We find another example in the following lines:

Badob' inhliziy' emnandi
KaNandi ongumnandi weNguga ...
(Msimang 1990:53).
(The ancestors choose a kind-hearted
Nandi, a well-disposed of iNguga ...)

The repetition of a word in two different senses is known as antanacsis or

asteismus. The name Nandi denotes sweetness. It shows that she was an attractive woman. Her adherence to iNguga, which is assumed to be the regiment, is remarkable and is due to her good disposition and humanness.

The use of pun generally embraces the descriptive phrasal and musical powers of expression. We recapitulate by looking at the brightness of the sun and the sweetness of Nandi as a descriptive power of expression. By looking at the words in relation to each other to determine punning both phrasal and musical powers are called for. Most words derive from the same nominal or pronominal category; therefore, their use is flexible in achieving the intended thought and meaning.

Miscellaneous punning

Msimang's poems are rich in figures of speech. There is a wide use of pun in most of the poems in his latter volume of poetry. The following few examples of punning are mentioned:

Noun-noun

Impolompol' ingaphez' ukumpompoza.

(Msimang 1990:34).

(The talkative individual who talks incessantly.)

Verb-deverbative noun

Yayaluz' ubuyaluyalu ...

(Msimang 1990:31).

(It restlessly moved about in commotion ...)

Composite noun-verb

Usinqawunqawu siyanqawuza ...

(Msimang 1990:64).

(A quick tempered person who quickly reacts ...)

Composite noun-noun

Monase ongafelwa mona ...

(Msimang 1990:64).

(The jealous one who is devoid of jealousy ...)

Copulative-verb

Bath' ulishaka kanti yikhon' ezobashakazisa.

(Msimang 1990:50).

(They say he is a stomach disease hence he will devastate them.)

Verb-possessive

Sibong' ukwethwasa kwentwasahlobo ...

(Msimang 1990:35).

(We thank the commencement of springtime ...)

We discover that puns have an alliterate effect. The poet uses words as various parts of speech because of the sound and sense they evoke. The poet successfully employs pun, sometimes known as paronomasia. The double meaning of a word or phrase is used for suggestive purposes. Puns can be effective in the hands of the well-established poet, but disastrous and detrimental for the beginner.

Irony

Irony is a rhetoric device which is based on contrast or difference. It expresses the opposite of what it means. It can be brought about by a word, words or phrases. The words or phrases are chosen and arranged to convey contrary meanings.

Muecke, (1969:53) says this about irony:

The 'real meaning' may be the contrary of the 'pretended meaning.'

Irony was used in literature centuries before the time of Christ. Cuddon, (1976:336) states what the Roman rhetoricians, in particular Cicero and Quintilian, say:

Ironia denoted a rhetorical figure and a manner of discourse, in which, for the most part, the meaning was contrary to the words.

Corbett, (1966:445) puts forth the same view as other scholars about irony:

... the use of a word in such a way as to convey a meaning opposite to the literal meaning of the word.

Irony is also used as a witting or unwitting instrument of truth. It is, therefore, evident that irony is the precious and efficient weapon of the satirist. Muecke, (1969:10) stresses two views:

- that 'modern' literature must be ironical, and
- that all good literature is by definition ironical.

Overt irony

Muecke, (1969:53) has this opinion on overt irony:

... the victim or the reader or both are meant to see the ironist's real meaning at

once. What makes irony overt is blatancy in the ironic contradiction or incongruity. The tone in overt irony may be either congruous with the real meaning and it is then that we have an exaggeration of the tone appropriate to the ostensible meaning

In the poem, Hhawu! NgoMaganedlula (What an ill-mannered lady), we find an example of overt irony:

Ntokaz' ethand' amadod' onke
Wen' othandwa ngamadod' onke,
Ntokaz' abakuthand' usundinda ...
(Msimang 1990:25).

(Lady who loves every men
You who is loved by all men,
Lady who is loved even when wandering ...)

This overtness is vivid as money seen to be similar to the misbehaving lady. In irony we do not focus on a word, words or the phrase. Instead words signify the opposite of what they usually express or they exaggerate the intended meaning. In the poem, we see that money's function as an economic entity is exaggerated so as to show the behaviour of an immoral lady. Money, with all its positive influences on social development is likened to negative human behaviour. It is possible and acceptable for a lady to be liked by all men, but impossible and unacceptable to be simultaneously loved at all. It is an exaggeration to compare a wandering lady with circulating money.

Irony has many functions and is often used as the witting or unwitting instrument of truth. In our example, the character of the prostitute is blatantly endowed with the attributes of circulating money. Irony is a figure of speech which conveys a message in a sarcastic way. However, it is clear that irony always perceives discrepancy or incongruity between words and their meanings, actions and their consequences as well as between appearance and reality.

Covert irony

Covert irony is not meant to be obvious but rather to be detected. It is easy to detect covert irony when there is prior knowledge. In the poem, Inkondlo Yezingqalabutho (A poem about the pioneers), we detect covert irony through prior knowledge:

Ngob' ethi ubudoda beklwa
Basal' esikhungweni saseNcome;
Ngob' ethi ubuqhawe bejozi
Basal' esikhungweni eMaqongqo;
Ngob' ethi ubungwazi besijula
Basal' enkundleni eNdondakusuka ...
(Msimang 1990:20).

(Because he says manhood's broad-bladed spear
Was left in the warren of Blood River,
Because he says the heroism of broad-bladed spear,
Was left in the warren of Maqongqo,
Because he says the heroism of hunting spear
Was left at Ndondakusuka's field.)

There are three historical figures and the battles that are implied above: The first is Dingane's battle with the Afrikaners at Blood River; the second is of Dingane against his brother, Mpande at Maqongqo and the last is of Cetshwayo against Mbuyazi at Ndondakusuka. Nozishada, the son of Maqhoboza of the Nzuza's clan, was a general in Mpande's army and was in charge of the regiment at the battle of Maqongqo. He was a famous warrior. In the poem, the arch-rivalry between Cetshwayo and Mbuyazi is illustrated. Mbuyazi, whose famous praise name Indlovu enesihlonti (the elephant with a turf of hair), begins to have more hope of leading the kingdom. In his favour is the fact that he is the eldest son of Monase, Mpande's favourite wife. The claim of Mbuyazi to be the only surviving son of King Shaka is rumoured and strengthened. This situation compels Cetshwayo to act swiftly and decisively, but he continues to negotiate with his rival. It becomes obvious that the person at the centre of the dispute is their father, Mpande. His double-standards perpetuate feuds, enmity and hardship in the kingdom. Mpande openly shows that he favours Mbuyazi as his successor. His actions forced Cetshwayo to attain distinction and honour.

Although the historical background of the figures and battles are covert, it is explicit that the use of the broad-bladed spear and hunting spear belong to the past and cannot benefit the present situation.

Praising in Order to Blame

Praise for desirable qualities known to be lacking

In the poem, Bamgudluzile (He has been eliminated), the poet asks a series of rhetorical questions which lead to a specific idea:

Yini engakwenelisa sidalwa esingumuntu?
Yini engakulungisa sigwegwe esingumuntu?

Iqiniso elingabandlululi uyaligubuzela ...
(Msimang 1980:26).

(What can make you satisfied human creature?
What can make you straight crooked person?
The indiscriminant truth you are hiding it ...)

The desirable qualities are satisfaction, fairness, order, justice and truth. These are known to be lacking. The poet effectively and efficiently communicates with humankind in a religious way. The poem expresses the sorrow at the loss of God's son, Jesus. This is a religious poem which looks at polarity of values: love and hate, war and peace, uprightness and crookedness, truth and falseness. Desirable qualities are compared to undesirable ones. It is likely that people overlook that God is omniscient and so knows all things; that he is omnipresent, that is simultaneously everywhere, and is omnipotent, ever-powerful. The essential characteristics of His being are unique and indescribable and so help to distinguish Him from His creation.

The basic desirable qualities which contribute towards the good and healthy life of the nation are humanness, good morals and respect.

Praise for having undesirable qualities or for lacking desirable qualities
In the poem, Iqhwa (Frost), an object is praised for having undesirable but acceptable qualities:

Inhliziyo yakho kayinagazi
Wasifika kulomhlaba sincwaba,
Usishiye sizimpundle,
Nkosazana emhlophe.
(Msimang. 1980:43).

(Your heart has no blood
You found us healthy-looking on earth
You left us poverty-stricken,
White lady.)

It is unlikely that a 'lady' be bloodless and heartless as the poet ironically states. The white lady represents frost. The presence of frost, which takes spongiform, filicoid and stellate patterns, marks the coldest season of the year. The frost depicts a lack of three qualities: life, cheer and warmth. The undesirable qualities that are noticeable are the state of being uneasiness, poverty-stricken, barrenness and dull scenery.

Whenever there is frost, there is a lack of life. Liveliness is replaced by dullness, abundance by scarcity, merriment by dejection, warmth by frigidity. The undesirable and desirable qualities are compared in relation to giving praise so as to blame.

Blaming in order to praise

Blame for having desirable qualities or for lacking undesirable qualities

In the poem, Mshayeleni Ihlombe (Give him applauds), a person is blamed and slandered for his good qualities:

"Lo muntu unesalamuzi"
"... Lo muntu wenza ngomuthi."
"Umshehshelengwana lo, uyazincengela."
(Msimang 1980:49)

("This person has magic."
"This person uses charms."
"This informer buys favours.")

A person who succeeds in life because of his untiring, undaunted and perceptible hard work is seen in a different light by those who are jealous of him. The successful person is usually framed, blackmailed and humiliated. He is called an informer, a traitor, a witch and magician by those who are evil-minded and ill-natured because of jealousy.

It is common for under-achievers to excuse their own failure by spoiling the reputation of those who do achieve. The three quoted lines blend the phrasal and emotional powers of expression with catastrophic impact. The real meaning behind the situation is seen in contrast to the ironical statements. In irony, the ironist regards the visible as invisible, the audible as inaudible, what needs to be overcome as insurmountable, and what must be equaled as unmatched. There is no need to blame a person with desirable qualities.

Ambiguity

Ambiguity is an attempt by the poet to create mystery through using words with several meanings. Ambiguity is used to challenge the reader or listener. Reaske, (1966:26-27) gives this information about ambiguity:

By suggesting several meanings this process is inevitably magnified. This is intentional ambiguity. Accidental ambiguity often occurs, ... through careless

composition, neglects to qualify a line or an image sufficiently confusion ...

A deeper insight into the concept of ambiguity encompasses the poet, text and reader. The text is the medium through which the poet communicates his message and through which the reader or listener understands and interprets the poet's message. Ambiguity is actualized when interpreted in context. It occurs when two or more distinct meanings are tenable in a context by rendering a choice between the alternatives.

Many analysts have discussed ambiguity. The better known analysts are William Empson, who published *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930) and Kaplan and Kris (1948). With ambiguity the word is used in an extended sense and so gives alternative reactions for either general or specific meaning. Kaplan and Kris (1948) put forth a classification of five types of ambiguity: disjunctive, conjunctive, additive, integrative and projective.

Conjunctive ambiguity

In this type of ambiguity separate meanings function jointly in the process of interpretation. It involves two meanings which are responded to conjointly. It underlies metaphor, allegory and irony. In the poem, Iziziba ZoThukela (The pools of Thukela), ambiguity is seen in the following extract:

Ziziba ezizonzobele
Zolani ningisondezele.
Ngiyabesaba oben' ubunzulu,
Ngiphons' itshe lazika ...
(Msimang 1980:64).

(Deep and calm pools
Be quiet and attract me.
I am afraid of your depth,
I threw a stone and it sank down ...)

This type of ambiguity is evident when we look at iziziba (pools) as the source of life. The pools seen literally as water sources and figuratively as sources of education are both combined to focus on life. The words, zolani (be quiet), ubunzulu (depth) and itshe lazika (the stone sank down) give a full description of the pools. In the praise-poems, UBhambatha KaMakhwatha (Bhambatha of Makhwatha), conjunctive ambiguity is noted prior to extolling and comprehending the praises as follows:

Uvava lwenkunzi yakith' eMvoti ...
(Msimang 1990:47).

(Our sharp-horned bull of Mvoti ...)

The primary meaning of uvava lwenkunzi (a sharp-horned bull) is that of a strong and powerful beast, while the secondary is of a well-known person of strong physique and character. The meanings are ultimately shared through the process of interpretation after comprehending the diction used in the praises. Apostrophe plays a significant role in ambiguity. In ambiguity, the primary and secondary meanings are both considered for interpretation. The message is communicated from the poet to the reader with alternative meanings.

Additive ambiguity

The separate meanings are not fully exclusive but differ only in degree of specificity, or in what they add to the common meaning. An example is taken from the poem, Xola Hleziphi (Be appeased Hleziphi). Here, the poet acquires the inspiration to write his poem from the isiZulu drama Izulu Eladuma eSandlwana (The Thunderstorm that thundered on iSandlwana Hill). Hleziphi is the fictitious character who accepts Washesha's proposal of love. Washesha is a hero and one of the iNgobamakhosi Regiment's recruits who met his fate on iSandlwana hill during the Anglo-Zulu war. All the promises made by Washesha to Hleziphi regarding their future did not come true because of death. In the third stanza Washesha boldly states that:

Hleziphi uWashesha yibutho,
Hleziphi, inhliziyo yebutho
Yinhliziyoye isiboshwa;
Nom' inkumbulo ingeboshwe ...
(Msimang 1990:36).

(Hleziphi, Washesha is a warrior,
Hleziphi, the heart of a warrior
Is the convict's heart;
Although remembrance cannot be tied-up ...)

Additive ambiguity is brought about by looking at yibutho (is a warrior) as the regiment's recruit and patriot. The poem is lyric in form as it is written for musical accompaniment. Its lyrical form expresses love in a specific dimension: two lovers who fell apart because of death. One may expect the poem to lament, but it portrays the acceptance of their separation. The poem speaks of ancestral spirits. In most poems we hear the animate person lamenting about the dead person, but here the opposite prevails. The extract reveals patriotism in Washesha who insists that no matter that he left his girlfriend, Hleziphi, he died for his country.

On the whole the poem is the lamentation of the dead, remembering his beloved one during their happy days.

Additive ambiguity is also evident in the poem Onoziqu Bakwa-Unisa where the compound word, bogcinalishone means "aged heroes", that is adults who are committed to education and experienced people. The cited example reads as follows:

Halala nakini bogcinalishone,
Nin' eniyibambe naze namadolonzima!
(Msimang 1990:42).

(Hurrah even to you aged heroes,
You who diligently pursued until you are aged!)

This extract contextually highlights that no matter it takes a lengthy period to graduate, but ultimately one accomplishes his or her goal. The poet salutes the aged who graduate despite all odds. This poem makes us see that education is indispensable, effective and meaningful at all times. It makes people keep pace with the latest developments in education and to strive to adapt successfully in a changing world.

Disjunctive ambiguity

The separate meanings are effective in the interpretation. Distinctiveness is seen when the separate meanings function as alternatives without inhibiting each other. In the poem, Isibaya Esikhulu se-Afrika (The big bye of Africa) ambiguity is evident in the following example:

Yagiya yonk' i-Afrika ...
(Msimang 1990:37).

(The whole Africa danced ...)

The word, Afrika refers to the continent and its inhabitants. Two separate meanings are used without inhibiting each other. This type of ambiguity is sometimes called 'plurisignation', that is, 'multiple meaning'. Disjunctive ambiguity is also found in the poem, Mihle Yonke Imibala (All colours are beautiful), where the poet recites as follows:

Ngilithandile kakhul' ilunga,
Ngilithandile kakhul' ilungakazi ...
(Msimang 1990:5).

(I liked very much the male black or brown beast,
I liked very much the female black or brown beast ...)

It is not easy to determine ambiguity in all the given examples without knowing their meanings. Ilunga (male black or brown beast with white stripes across stomach and backs) and ilungakazi (female black or brown beast with white stripes across stomach and backs) are the meanings attached to the beasts. The second cluster of meanings is the body, joint or internode. The third cluster is the official of an association or society. The poem should be repeatedly read to comprehend its meaning, message and central idea. A full understanding of poetic diction, themes and form encourages meaningful interpretation.

Integrative ambiguity

The close interweaving of meanings give the reader a single idea. Meanings evoke and support one another. They interact to produce a complex and shifting pattern of unified meaning. Integrative ambiguity is seen in the poem, Ngingene Endumisweni (I entered in the God's glory), where the poet recites as follows:

Ngibhula kuwe nyanga yamathambo ...
Ngibuza ngabayikazel' iminyezane ...
(Msimang 1990:28).

(I consult you bone diviner ...
I am asking about those wearing graduation attire ...)

Inyanga yamathambo (bone diviner) refers to the traditional era. Iminyezane (graduation attires) means the achievements within a tertiary institution and the traditional attire for garlanding heroes. These are symbolic elements used in a contemporary period. The warriors' insignia refer to the velour of the traditional period. The old meaning of iminyezane has shifted to the new. This type of ambiguity is also significantly noted in the same stanza:

Ngokwethweswa imiqhele yolwazi ...

(To be crowned with education head ornaments ...)

The word imiqhele is ambiguous. The unified meaning is crowns that are worn by the heroes. Traditionally, these were ornaments of beads or otter-skins worn around the head as a sign of rank or achievement. In contemporary times, they are the crowns of achievement which are conferred by various institutions. In conclusion, the words iminyezane (graduation attires) and imiqhele (education

ornaments) are each characterized by semantic shift, unified meaning and temporal setting.

Projective ambiguity

The meanings vary with the interpreter as they are projected. The reader is forced to invent interpretations, because a word or piece of text does not clearly signal the intended idea. It is therefore noted that subjectivity is inherent in this type of ambiguity. Projective ambiguity is noted in the poem, Xola Hleziphi. The distance between Hleziphi and Washesha is brought about by death. It is no longer possible for Washesha to come to Hleziphi physically, but only spiritually. It is easy for Hleziphi to follow her beloved one when she dies. The distance is shown in this extract:

... Ngikuthumelel' umlayezo
Oza ngamagagas' omoya
Ngivum'ingoma yenkumbulo
Nethemb' elingafezekanga ...
(Msimang 1990:36).

(I send you a message,
Which comes through the air waves,
Singing the song of remembrance
And unfulfilled hope ...)

The poem reveals that love does not end up on earth. Washesha mourns his untimely departure from this world before fulfilling the promises that he made. Despite the promises left hanging, he wishes her everything of the best throughout her life-span until circumstances and time allows them to meet again. The words ... umlayezo oza ngamagagas' omoya ... (a message which comes through the air waves ...) gives an inventive interpretation because communication between the living and dead people is unlikely to happen. Subjective interpretation is necessary, especially with the full exploitation of religious or cultural beliefs.

As a spirit Washesha utters all the appeasing, calm and encouraging words to Hleziphi who appears to be the passive character or the receiver in all the stanzas. The poet creates the world in which his characters live and so he gives life to fiction. His world is not a literal representation of the external world (things as they are) or even a generalized representation, but an escape from reality into an ideal world of transcendent forms. It is a fresh vision of reality about two lovers who are forced by death to part. It is also a reconstruction of human consciousness of things as they are. Projective ambiguity is also brought about by deverbative noun which is evident in the poem, Hhawu! NgoMaganedlula for example:

Nginyekeni ngiyofosha ngefosholo ...
(Msimang 1990:26).

(Leave me to dig with shovel ...)

The diction used by the poet is ukufosha (to dig with spade) and ifosholo (spade or shovel). It is a known fact that soil is dug, but in this context the poet refers to money. The real meaning is projected in the poem. The words do not signal the intended meaning until projection provides the subjective interpretation.

The descriptive images based on repetition

Msimang uses many types of repetition techniques in his poetry. Circumlocution is a rhetoric device whereby a poet generally says one or two things by using groups of words. The words used have the power to elicit imagined sensory reactions. This is characterized by redundancy, verbosity, emphasis, expansion and uneconomical use but well-selected words. Pleonasm differs from the above figurative device because it is characterized by a repetition of ideas and meanings through emotive language.

Apposition as a rhetoric device

Circumlocution is a roundabout way of writing or speaking which is more prosaic in character. The poet tends to use many words where few will do. It is a rhetoric device that is prevalent in rhetoric and prose, but the poet can also use it as a poetic decorum. It is also known as periphrasis. Throughout his work, the poetic techniques are more appositional for poetic rhythm. His poetry is characterized by appositional structures which are dominated by lists of names of traditional leaders and heroes. Sometimes a genealogy tree is included. An apposition is a common method of expansion used to place two co-ordinate elements side by side, the second of which serves as an explanation or modification of the first. Sometimes prominent leaders, especially kings, are lauded with the whole expression or phrase. In this study we confine ourselves to the following apposition examples:

- descriptive phrase
- co-ordinate elements
- genealogical structure
- variations formula

Apposition as phrase

This poetic device is used to employ a collection of words or the whole phrase to

depict a person, incident or a specific object. In the poem, Siwela iMoretele, the example is the following:

Ukhozi olumaphiko azinkemba ...
(Msimang 1990:15).

(The eagle with sword-like wings ...)

Ukufa (death) is given the characteristics of an eagle and expressed in a phrasal laudation. An eagle is a bird with powerful wings. The image of an eagle recurs and is associated with death because of its characteristics and actions. In the praise-poem, Ku DBZ Ntuli the phrasal periphrasis is evident in this example:

Ingqwayingqwayi yaseGcotsheni ...
UMshikishi wendlela.
(Msimang 1980:9)

(The chosen one of eGcotsheni
The determined walker of the path.)

Professor DB Ntuli is metaphorically called, Ingqwayingqwayi yaseGcotsheni (The chosen one of eGcotsheni) and uMshikishi wendlela (The determined walker of the path). In an epic on King Shaka, he is called:

Nsika kaZulu
Nkonyane kaMenzi.
Zinyane leSilo.

(Pillar of the Zulu nation.
Calf of God.
Lamb of leopard.)

The addition of possessives is appositional in all the apostrophes used. Insika (pillar), inkonyane (calf) and izinyane (lamb) are qualified by the use of the Zulu nation, uMenzi (God) and isilo (leopard).

Apposition as co-ordinate elements

The power structures are implicit in the whole poem and reflect the content in relation to various ethnic groups and colonial impacts. Heroes are co-ordinated to highlight their specific clans. It is a fundamental approach which is wordy and appositional. The example is taken from the poem, Ifu Elimnyama (The dark clouds):

Bizan' imbizo yezinyandezulu
ZawoThesele noMshweshwe kubaShweshwe
ZawoMantathisi noKhama kubeTswana
ZawoSikwati noSikhukhuni kubaPedi
ZawoNzunza noManala kumaNdebele
ZawoSoshangane noNgungunyane kumaShangane
ZawoMaqoma noHahabe kumaXhosa
ZawoMphephu noSibasa kumaVenda
ZawoMadikane noNcaphayi kumaBhaca
ZawoMoorosi noLipholo kubaPhuthi
ZawoMzilikazi noDonda kumaNtungwa
ZawoLanga noZwide kumaNdwandwe
ZawoJobe noDingiswayo kumaMthethwa
ZawoPhunga noMageba kumaZulu.
(Msimang 1990:33).

(Call the ancestors meeting
OfThesele and Moshoeshe of Sotho
Of Mantathisi and Khama of Tswana
OfSekwati and Sekhukhuni of Pedi
OfNzunza and Manala of Southern Ndebele
OfSoshangane and Ngungunyane of Shangane
OfMaqoma and Hahabe of Xhosa
OfMphephu and Sibasa of Venda
OfMadikane and Ncaphayi of Bhaca
OfMoorosi and Lipholo of Phuthi
OfMzilikazi and Donda of Ntungwa
OfLanga and Zwide of Ndwandwe
OfJobe and Dingiswayo of Mthethwa
OfPhunga and Mageba of Zulu.)

It is, however, possible for the poet to express his views in one line by summing up as follows: Bizani imbizo yezinyandezulu zabamnyama (Call the meeting of Black ancestors). The extract shows the first introductory line as an exposition and the following thirteen as an extension by using heroes and their clans in a more co-ordinated manner. In most cases, the co-ordinate elements are illustrative by furthering the reader's understanding and inducing impressions of the pleasurable sense.

Apposition as genealogical structure

In African poetry the poets like to use genealogy in an appositional way for

emphasis. This is vital for both elucidation and expansion. In an epic on Shaka genealogical structure is noted when the poet refers to Shaka's forefathers as follows:

OPhunga noMageba noNdaba.
(Msimang 1990:60).

(Phunga and Mageba and Ndaba.)

Genealogical structure is of much significance in most eulogies as it depicts history, background information and attachments. In most praise poems, poets tend to use it as foreshadowing, refrain, rhythmic repetition or linking line. In the praise poem on DBZ Ntuli he is lauded as follows:

UMgqibelo kaSichwe.
(Msimang 1980:9)
(Mgqibelo of Sichwe)

Apposition is directly viewed when genealogical structure or co-ordinated elements are used. It is indirectly viewed when the descriptive phrases are employed because certain metaphoric devices are also encompassed. Apposition as variations formula

The variations are evident in verses. His poetry is mainly characterized by three variations, namely:

- Eulogie formal as a variation
- Eulogie to narrative
- Narrative to eulogie

The variations are not consciously and deliberately made, but they occur spontaneously and reflect the experiences and thoughts of society. The poet has employed the variations formula in his poetry to reflect eulogistic and narrative variations. These variations exhibit poetic qualities. Greater concentration and greater richness are achieved by the use of these poetic variations which are reinforced by imagery.

Eulogie formula as a variation

Eulogie is prevalent in the heroic epic poem on King Shaka. One of the examples is the one Msimang extracted from Shaka's praises in Cope, (1968:89) which are eulogized as follows:

UDlungwana kaNdaba!
UDlungwana woMbelebele,
Odlung' emanxulumeni
Kwaze kwas' amanxulum' esibekelana.
(Msimang 1990:67).

(Dlungwana son of Ndaba!
Ferocious one of the uMbelebele brigade,
Who raged among the large kraals,
So that until dawn the huts being turned upside-down.)

In another example, King Shaka is synecdochically eulogized as follows:

Uliso limnjonjo limnjonjonono,
Lijolozel' umuntu wawa phansi ...
(Msimang 1990:63)

(The ever sharp eye
Which gazed at the person and fell down ...)

The use of an eulogie in epic poetry makes it share similar characteristics with the praises. Shaka is metaphorically called uDlungwana (ferocious one) and synecdochically called Uliso limnjonjo (ever-sharp eye). Eulogie variation is a rich composition which is common in praises.

From narrative to eulogie

The first two words in each extracted line are mere narrations when looked at without the meaning of the last two words in each line. In the poem, Onoziqu Bakwa-Unisa the graduates are likened to warriors who gained victory in battle. It figuratively highlights about the females that pursue tertiary education. They are eulogized as follows:

Nani bomame anisayilwisi okwamanina;
Nani bomame anisaphumi nivathazela;
Senithath' usiba nalwenz' umkhonto;
Senithath' iphepha nalenz' isihlangu ...
(Msimang 1990:42)

(Even you mothers you no longer fight like the females;
Even you mothers you no longer come out empty-handed;
You have taken a pen and made it your assegai;
You have taken a paper and made it a shield ...)

The above extract compares traditional and modern lives. In olden times, women involved themselves mostly in their domestic duties. Nowadays they explore all academic avenues and venture into all fields with determination, persistence and diligence. The poem itself is viewed according to Aristotle's opinion of considering the introduction, middle and end. This states that it is the imitation of action which is serious, has magnitude and is written in language with pleasurable accessories. The graduates as the central characters in the poetic discourse that are praised for their achievement. The magnitude implies the beginning, middle and an end. The introductory stanza depicts the national heroes who worked diligently to uphold the philosophy and culture of the nation. The central section of the poem reveals how the goals are achieved. The poem concludes by summarizing those incidents and ideas highlighted at the beginning and in the middle. In the second example the poet reveals cultural changes when he says that:

NoZulu wasiyek' isihlangu nesijula,
Wabeshloma ngepeni nepensela ...
(Msimang 1990:43)

(Even the Zulus have left the shield and spear,
They are armed with the pen and the pencil ...)

Here we see new trend introduced by missionaries as well as their involvement and activities in education. Traditional weapons such as the shield and spear are used as recurrent images to represent a temporal setting. In modern times they are replaced by the tools of formal education, especially the pen and pencil.

Eulogie to narrative

The use of eulogie to narrative is shown in the praise-poem, Nge-Unisa Eminyakeni Elikhulu (Unisa after hundred years of existence):

UNondlinikazi waseMzansini obhonse kwenanela Izintaba nemimango ...
Isibani esikhanye phezu kweMuckleneuk ...
UNdlela ziyaqonsa zifuze ezentab' i-Everest ...
(Msimang 1980:2).

(Good milking cow of South Africa, low so that the mountains and steep hills echoed.

The candle that lights on Muckleneuk ...
The steep path which is similar to that of Everest Mountain ...)

The opening words in the lines are more of a eulogie than narration because Unisa, an academic tertiary institution, is endowed with the attributes of unondlini (good milking cow), isibani (candle) and indlela (path). Msimang's poetry has both a modern and traditional flair. This combination is evident in lines, stanzas and in some of his praise-poems. The variations blend the eulogues and narratives. Another example of eulogie to narrative variation is found in the poem, UBhambatha KaMakhwatha:

Iguqa ngelezinkomo zaseNkobongo
Iguqa ngelezinkomo zaseMzwangedwa ...
(Msimang 1990:46).

(A grown-up beast of cattle of Nkobongo
A grown-up beast of cattle of Mzwangedwa ...)

Bhambatha is given the attributes of iguqa (a grown-up beast), which is the heritage and precious good of the nation. The grown-up beast refers to eulogie while the succeeding words represent a narrative variation. The two places Nkobongo and Mzwangedwa are remarkable in the life of Bhambatha because he grew up and learned Zulu culture there. The name Bhambatha was given to Dr BW Vilakazi because he was born during a Bhambatha rebellion. We note that the sender and recipient are bound together by the conveyed message.

Pleonasm

This is a deliberate rhetoric device which is pleonastic in form. It expresses the same thing twice for emphasis, rhythm or special effect without any other thought or meaning. Pleonasm is used as a derived noun with verbs, descriptive phrases and emphasized ideas.

Derived noun with verbs

The example of a deverbative noun used pleonastically with verbs is taken from the praise poem, UShaka kaSenzangakhona as follows:

UNodumehlezi wadum' ehlezi!
(Msimang 1990:57)
(Nodumehlezi became famous while seated!)

UNodumehlezi is a deverbative or composite noun meaning "one who is famous while seated." It precedes two verbs which have the same meaning. Therefore, the deverbative noun and two verbs express similar thought or meaning. The second example refers to Senzangakhona when he is lauded as follows:

UNomasikisiki, inyoni esindwa sisila ...
(Msimang 1990:54).

(Nomasikisiki, a bird with heavy tail ...)

The poet refers to Senzangakhona as Nomasikisiki or isakabuli (black-tailed finch). His appellation, uNomasikisiki (black-tailed African finch), is taken from the ideophone, sikisiki which describes the action of the finch. The expression, inyoni esindwa sisila (the bird with heavy tail) is a description of the preceding derived noun. The whole line emphasizes one thought.

Descriptive adjacent phrases

Two adjacent phrases are looked at in relation to each other. Both phrases express one thought from various points of view. In the poem, Izintaba Ezikude pleonasm is evident when ubumhlophe (whiteness) is expressed in comparison to iqhwa (frost). The first phrase, hhayi ubumhlophe (what a surprising whiteness), gives a full idea of colour and situation. The second phrase liqhwa elilele kulezo ntaba (It is a frost that covered those mountains) also expresses this idea. The cited example is:

Hhayi ubumhlophe! Liqhwa elilele kulezo ntaba ...
(Msimang 1990:19)

(What a surprising whiteness! The frost that covered those mountains.)
The second example is taken from the poem, Inkondlo Yezingqalabutho: Bethenwe ubunkunzi baphenduk' amanxahi ...
(Msimang 1990:20)

(Their manhood is castrated and turned them into fully-grown castrated bulls.)
Ukuthena (to castrate) is repeated in the same line for added emphasis. It means "to be unproductive", "powerless" and "useless". In the same poem there are several examples which express emphasis. What is meant in the first two words in each line is emphasized by the last words. Examples are:

Kunamuhla ngihaya ngihalalisa,
Ngisina indlamu ngiyagadlela,
Ngisina ngigqigqa ngiyagqigqizela,
Ngisina indlamu yosikisiki ...
(Msimang 1990:19)

(Even today I sing and applaud,
I fully partake in dance,
I dance and bustle about,
I dance that of inspiration ...)

The poem itself is about the feeling of happiness in honour of the pioneers of isiZulu creative writing, namely Dr BW Vilakazi and RRR Dlomo. The poem is dedicated to them for their wonderful work, done for the nation. Their contributions remain historic marks and some of their works remain unmatched even today. The impact that their literary works had in their lifetimes remains unchanged. Their literary contribution to the nation is unique. It is part of African culture to express happiness through dance. The idea of dance is repeated and idiomatically stated: ngisina indlamu (I fully partake in dance). In most Zulu dances both the body and voice play a part. Sound and kinesthetic imagery are heard from beginning to the end. The fictional element in poetry allows us to describe contexts which are ever implicit and explicit, implied and distant and by referring to both real and imaginary worlds.

Descriptive parallel comparison

This is a parallel comparison which is pleonastic because one meaning is expressed in two different ways.

Ngokukhwela uMakhuluneke
Ngokuqombola ezimakhelekethe zakwa-Unisa.
(Msimang 1980:10)

(By climbing Muckleneuk
By going up a steep gorge of Unisa.)

The poet refers to receiving an education through the University of South Africa. The idea of ukukhwela (to climb) is expressed in both lines by the synonyms, ukukhwela and ukuqombola. In the poem, Sabuna Isihlahla (The tree faded) all four lines repeat the idea of control. The first line reveals the general holistic view. The second and third lines express the specific elementalistic view by mentioning the two compass points, east and west. The dimension is revealed and highlighted in these lines:

Bazazi bengamakhosi omhlaba,
Ngoba belawula eMpumalanga;
Ngoba belawula eNtshonalanga;
Lowo mhlaba usesandleni sakhe.
(Msimang 1990:29)

(They know themselves to be the world's kings
Because they rule in the east,
Because they rule in the west;
That earth is in his hand.)

The poet tells of certain characters who appear to be in control of everything on earth. If people are known as amakhosi omhlaba (earthly kings) it means that they have strength and power to do whatever they like, at any time. The images of superiority and authoritativeness are manifested. It is not likely for the people to control all directions as poetically expressed by the poet. This is an overstatement used solely to reveal an intended idea. The fact that they know themselves to be kings sheds doubt on their supremacy and power over other people. The actions and thoughts of a human being are determined and controlled by his freedom of expression. A person can rule eMpumalanga (in the east) and eNtshonalanga (in the west) but his leadership, control and domination have a time frame. It is generally known that life is subjected to these inevitable pairs: superiority and inferiority, hope and despondency, life and death.

Conclusion

From the foregoing analysis on images based on contrast and difference, it is deduced that antithesis in his poetry is based on contrasting words and clauses. The ideas and emotions are expressed through antithetic imagery. Sarcasm plays a major role in various types of poems by describing things or situations as they are without any mild or pleasant expressions. The use of sarcasm is displayed by the selected poetic diction. It is prevalently relentless, sharp and discordant. Play on words is looked at through a syntactical point of view and we see how it depicts creativeness, compactness and contrasts.

Rhetoric question is looked at in relation to the senses. For an example: sight and hearing. It is a rhetoric device used for emphasis and special effect. Apposition has been used by poet to describe persons or objects, to co-ordinate the scattered elements and to structurally divulge the genealogical make-up. Pleonasm is prevalently dominant in his poetry in these arrangements: composite noun and its description, descriptive adjacent phrases and descriptive parallel comparison. Imagery has played a vital role in the poet's work. It is the essence, constituent and wealth of his poetry which have combined the past, present and the future in a convincing manner.

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